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WHAT IS  
THE DESTINY OF CANADA?

BY ERASTUS WIMAN.

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“The highest truth the wise man sees, he will fearlessly utter, knowing that come what may of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world,—knowing that if he can effect the change he aims at, well; if not well also, but not *so* well.”—HERBERT SPENCER.

# WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF CANADA ?

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EIGHT men of every ten in the United States, who have thought upon the subject, have reached the conclusion that Canada ought to belong to that country. This decision has not been reached by an elaborate process of reasoning, nor by a mature consideration of the consequences of such an event. The general belief that the United States comprises nearly all that is worth having on the continent makes it easy for the average American to jump to the conclusion that what remains ought to be included within the Union. Without realizing the magnitude of the country to the north, or making any estimate of its possibilities, the general conclusion is that its addition to the United States would not disturb or imperil the existing system. A more careful study of the matter might lead to a different conclusion ; but, in view of the feeling which now prevails, the eventual acquisition of Canada as a National policy would be approved by an immense majority.

While the opinion that Canada should belong to the United States is general, no one proposes to achieve it

by other than peaceable means. In the event of war with England, public sentiment would entirely change, and Canada would then be the battle-ground. It might even happen that a persistence by the Canadian Government in a nagging and unfriendly policy, as shown in the harsh and antiquated interpretation of the Fishery Treaty, the constant invitation to retaliation by acts of apparent bad neighborhood, by hostile tariffs and other irritating influences, might work up a sentiment in the United States that would demand and justify the military capture of Canada. If, indeed, the anti-British vote in the United States had any real influence upon the policy of the country (which it has not), some military advantage might be taken of Canada's weakness, by reason of its remoteness from Great Britain, and the enormous preponderance of the United States. But up to the present hour there is not the slightest sign, in any class or in any direction, of a desire to acquire Canada other than by the free and unbiassed consent of her own people.

While it may be said, in truth, that eight of every ten men in the United States would like to see Canada a part of the Union, it could, until recently, with equal truth be alleged that, in Canada, eight of every ten Canadians preferred to preserve existing political conditions, and to remain part and parcel of the British Empire. An agitation for closer commercial relations, which have been denied to them; a persistence in a restrictive and offensive policy toward the United States, and an attempt to divert public opinion in favor of some form of Imperial Federation with other colo-

nies, have, it is true, created a sentiment in favor of annexation nearly as pronounced as the Tory manifesto of 1849. This tendency has recently been quickened by the encroachments of the Roman Catholic Church, and its evident hold upon legislation, as evinced in large grants of public money to Jesuits in Quebec, which were afterwards confirmed by a preponderating vote of the Dominion Parliament. It is true that this growth of the annexation sentiment is denied by superloyalists, and subsidized supporters of the present administration, and its existence for any present political purpose is ignored. Yet it is claimed by some observers that, if a secret ballot were taken in Canada to-day on the question, a vast number of the voters would be found to favor a political union. But the fact that a *secret* ballot would have to be taken in order to evoke any pronounced opinion in its behalf, is the significant circumstance by which the force of the movement is to be judged. No man, however favorable he may be to a political union between the two countries, and with a perfect knowledge of the conditions that prevail, can believe that such a revolution in public sentiment is possible as would elect, within a period of twenty years, a Parliament whose main plank should be annexation to the United States. True, now and then there are indications of a growing party in favor of political union; but their rarity and inconsequent character show that, while the sentiment may be a growing one, many years will pass before it is sufficiently effective to become a force in practical politics.

It must always be borne in mind that the great

body of thinking Canadians are quite content with their present political condition. In the absence of universal suffrage, and wanting the constant additions of a foreign vote which threatens the political extinction of the American; in the absence also of an elective judiciary; with a system of government less dependent upon the corner saloon, the professional politician, and the ward boss; with an admirable code of election laws, under which bribery is difficult, if not impossible; and with many other improvements upon the American system, the political contentment of the Canadian is assured. Aside from this, there is a sincere and ardent attachment to British institutions, and especially to the person of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. It could hardly fail to be otherwise. England has treated Canada with the utmost liberality, and it has often been said that if, prior to the Revolution, Great Britain had treated the colonies with the same consideration and coöperation, there would have been no Declaration of Independence. Made up as Canada largely is of descendants of United Empire Loyalists, and of former residents of Great Britain or their immediate descendants, between whom and the mother country there is a close business and social connection, how is it possible that an allegiance so constant and beneficial should be suddenly and without justification severed? This is all the more unlikely when it is recalled that there is now a steady stream of immigration into the great Northwest, made up of English people who deliberately prefer to live under British rule.

Perhaps the most serious barrier, however, to the vital change in the political condition of Canada which would follow annexation to the United States, is the French Canadian element, under the dominant influence of the Roman Catholic Church. It may be doubted if anywhere else in the world this great clerical institution rules more absolutely than in Quebec. Elsewhere its power and influence diminish; its wealth is stationary or decreases; but here, in free North America, in the Nineteenth Century, the Roman Catholic Church is becoming so dominant, so successful in a business point of view, and so generally aggressive, as to create serious alarm for the future in the minds of the Protestants of Canada. The marvellous fecundity of the French race, their thrift, industry and contentment, are elements of vital strength in this religious propaganda; and already considerable areas, formerly jointly occupied by Protestant and Catholic communities, are given up to French domination. Special privileges, the right to levy tithes, protection, and other important advantages are assured to the French church under existing political conditions. These, it is feared, would be materially lessened should annexation to the United States ever occur, although there is nothing in the usual State Constitution that would prohibit the exercise of these privileges, nor is there any such prohibition in the Federal Constitution which joins the States together. The complete control of education, the possession of vast estates for religious purposes, freedom from local taxation, and public grants, it is true, is possible in a free State of the

Union. But what would be feared would be the danger of an influx into Quebec of intelligent Protestants, owing to the development of natural resources and the increase of foreign capital as a result of annexation. The influences of a progressive spirit, greater intelligence, higher forms of education, and freedom of inquiry into the power and influence of the church, would be more dreaded in the Province of Quebec than even a change in the political conditions.

Turning for a moment from a consideration of the obstacles in Canada itself to annexation, it may not be amiss to direct the attention of the thinking people of the United States to the possible consequences of the admission into the Union of such a State as Quebec might become in the event of its absorption, a state of enormous proportions and possibilities, whose people and politics were entirely dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. There are not a few who feel that the growth of this great religious organization in the United States, especially as to its influence on educational affairs, is a tendency full of deep significance to the institutions of this country. In New England especially, with the rapidly changing character of its population, the apprehension is freely indulged in that the growth of Catholicism is full of peril, not only to the common school system, but to other vital interests of a popular and free government. To admit into the Union a state which has for its distinguishing feature a State Church and a control by priestcraft of almost all the affairs of its people, temporal as well as spiritual, would be to create a compact force within the



Union itself, from which would radiate influences throughout the rest of the country which many could not contemplate without anxious apprehension. This apprehension is all the better grounded when the rapidity of the growth of the French Catholic element on this continent is thoroughly understood, as it may be by some remarkable figures, quite recently furnished by that astute politician, the able Premier of Quebec, the Hon. Honore Mercier. These figures show that while in 1763, at the cession of Canada to the English, the French population numbered only 70,000, in 1890, without immigration of any moment whatever, they will number, in Quebec, 1,200,000, elsewhere in the Dominion, 300,000, and in the United States, 1,000,000; making a total French population on this continent of 2,500,000, a prodigious development, at the rate of 3,100 per cent. in 125 years, equivalent to 25 per cent. per annum! In other words, the French population in 1890, as compared with 120 years ago, will be as 31 to 1. To illustrate the significance of these startling figures, it may be stated that had the United States, with all its immigration and everything else to help it, grown with the same rapidity, it would, at this date, have a population of slightly over 100,000,000 instead of its existing 65,000,000. It is no wonder that Premier Mercier, in Canadian cartoons, is represented as dreaming of the total occupancy of the Dominion by the French race, especially when he indulges, as he does in his recent paper, in the belief that the combined French element in Canada and the United States, in fifty years, with the same ratio

of increase, will amount to between 15,000,000 and 18,000,000 souls. Just what influence this vast aggregation of practically foreign population, if admitted into the United States in compact and controllable shape, might have on the future of this country, if under the rigid control of priest and politician as now illustrated in Quebec, it is impossible to foresee, but it is safe to say that its contemplation will somewhat lessen the ardor for the annexation of a country containing such possibilities.

Meantime, returning again to Canada, an influence adverse to annexation prevails there, the force and universality of which very few in the United States apprehend. It is a Protestant force, and its reason for existence is opposition to the encroachments of the Roman Catholic Church; and yet, so pronounced is its loyalty, so prejudiced and ignorant is it in regard to the United States, that it would unite with its bitterest enemy to maintain British supremacy. This force is the secret society known as the Orange order, which, owing to recent events in the progress of Jesuitism, is likely to become, in conjunction with various sectarian bodies, the most powerful organization in Protestant Canada. It is impossible to conceive of a body of men more vociferously loyal to the Crown; and in view of the antecedents of its members, their prejudices and peculiar rites—in which an oath to maintain the British rule is the chief obligation assumed—it is difficult to see how political union can be attained while such an organization exercises an influence so powerful. It would, therefore, seem that two great organized forces

—to wit, Protestant and Catholic Canada—are arrayed against any political change whatever.

In considering the obstacles to a political union of Canada with the United States, nothing has been said as to the feeling of Great Britain on this question. It would seem almost incredible that the official and aristocratic class, which is so powerful in England, will favor the loss of nearly half of the British Empire, which would be the result of the annexation of Canada. The colonial policy of Great Britain has been largely stimulated by the expectation that trade would follow the flag, and that, if the English flag ceased to be emblematic of governmental control, English trade would languish and cease. Again the growth of a republican sentiment in Great Britain, which threatens existing institutions, would, it is presumed, receive an enormous impulse should these principles of government, by a single act, be extended over so large a part of the British Empire as is included within the greater half of the continent of North America. Still further, if Great Britain has spent millions of money and sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives to make conquests in distant parts of the world, it would be a complete reversal of policy to abandon or cede so great a country as Canada, cheerfully and without a murmur. When one recalls how essential to her political and military supremacy is the possession of outlying posts, such as Gibraltar, Malta, Bermuda, and other strongholds, it seems incredible that she would willingly relinquish Halifax on the Atlantic, or Vancouver on the Pacific. In addition to all this the new-born hopes of an alter-

native route, within British territory, to her vast Eastern possessions, and the expectations that have been raised in the minds of English capitalists as to the development of a great Eastern trade through English channels, as shown in the recent Pacific steamship subsidies, are all opposed to the assumption that England would for a moment consider favorably a proposition that her great colony of Canada should immediately become part and parcel of the United States.

In all this enumeration, difficulties in the way of the annexation of Canada to the United States which, for the moment seem insurmountable, present themselves. How many years must elapse before these difficulties will disappear so as to permit the election of a Parliament in Canada that will demand separation from the mother-country? How many years will elapse before Parliament puts an end to its own existence, and, filtering into a requisite number of State legislatures, merges itself into a Congressional delegation at Washington? The possibility of such a catastrophe to the Senate of Canada, who are all selected for life, and whose animating sentiment is loyalty to the British crown, it is impossible to contemplate with any expectation that its remnant would survive to tell the tale. Certainly not within the present generation does such a consummation as the extinction of Parliament seem possible to the average Canadian, who is familiar with the feeling of loyalty to the British crown on the one hand, and, on the other, the political cowardice and mock sentimentality that exist throughout Canada, which, even in the presence of a marked change favor-

able to open trade relations with the United States, and while one-fourth of its adult population is already in this country, shrieks hysterically, "Treason!" "Rebellion!" Under these circumstances a political union seems too remote to justify its present consideration, from a business point of view at least.

The peculiarities of the Canadians—their sturdy Anglo-Saxon nature—make the task a hopeless one, either to drive or force them into submission. Moreover, the great mass of the American people would disapprove such a policy. Those who might favor it would soon find that the people at large, especially the great mass of business men, would much prefer a more natural and a more profitable course. If a union of nations on this continent is to be brought about except by conquest, it must be brought about by union of interests. Unless a political union can be achieved by a perfect acquiescence in the advantages and superiority of the institutions of the United States, a political union would be a serious and fatal mistake.

It remains, therefore, to consider whether a Commercial Policy cannot be immediately inaugurated by both countries which will materially benefit both nations, without political union, and which might have the eventual effect of removing the obstacles to political union. There are those who think that a policy of retaliation—for which they allege Canada has afforded abundant justification—would starve the Dominion into submission; there are others who believe that a steady persistence in the policy of rigid and, perhaps, offensive indifference will result in Canada dropping like a ripe

plum into the ever-open mouth of the United States. But life is too short for either of these policies to work out a union of the English-speaking people on this continent in our day.

With this conception in view, a movement in favor of a Commercial Union between the two countries has been for some time making steady progress on both sides of the border. It has met with surprising favor in the United States among merchants, bankers, and manufacturers, and especially among the latter in New England industrial centres, who see in it a hopeful sign for a supply of raw material and cheapened food, on the one hand, and an enlarged market for the product of their industry, on the other. Nova Scotia to the New England States is a new Alabama, within easy reach, with resources equally important, especially to the regeneration of her iron industries. Without some such advantage these are doomed to extinction, in view of the competition of the Southern and Western States. With, however, sources of supply of iron, coal and coke and cheap food from Nova Scotia, New England iron industries would be able to hold their own against all competitors whether at home or abroad. It would save those who had hitherto been strenuous advocates of protection the humiliation of suing for partial abandonment of that principle in order to procure free raw material. When also a period is reached that a reduction of taxation is decided upon this near-by supply of raw material from Canada, should enable New England to compete in all the markets of the world, owing to its advantageous position on the sea-board.

The necessity of the woolen manufacturing interest, now so greatly depressed, would be greatly served by a free supply of Canadian wool, well known to be of a character greatly prized and, indeed, essential to mix with American wool. In New Brunswick and Quebec (the latter comprising five times the area of New York State) there would be stimulated the growth of wool and other essential supplies; from the great Province of Ontario—the most favored spot on the continent—there would be derived an infinite variety of products, from the mine, the forest, and the field; while in the enormous wheat-producing areas of the Canadian north-western territories there would be found a receptacle for immigration from all the world, thus affording a field for western trade and for western transportation of the greatest possible consequence. As for the Pacific coast, no boon could be afforded to California and Oregon greater than is implied in the essential supplies from British Columbia of the finest coal, the largest timber, and the enormous fishing wealth which the coast of that province affords—a coast the extent of which the reader will realize when he is told that it covers a mileage as great as from Florida in the south to the upper boundary of Maine on the north.

In furtherance of the pronounced sentiment in behalf of a commercial policy that would make all these palpable advantages almost immediately available, a most significant event was the unanimous passage, at the close of the last session of Congress, by the House of Representatives, of a resolution which, had it been assented to by the Senate, would have proved a great

stride towards a permanent and most beneficial settlement of all difficulties between the two nations. This resolution, the movement towards which originated in the fertile mind of the Hon. Benjamin Butterworth, but was eventually promoted by that sagacious statesman, the Hon. R. R. Hitt, of Illinois, is in the following words :

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, &c.,* That whenever it shall be duly certified to the President of the United States that the Government of the Dominion of Canada has declared a desire to establish commercial union with the United States, having a uniform revenue system, like internal taxes to be collected, and like import duties to be imposed, on articles brought into either country from other nations, with no duties upon trade between the United States and Canada, he shall appoint three commissioners to meet these who may be likewise designated to represent the Government of Canada, to prepare a plan for the assimilation of the import duties and internal revenue taxes of the two countries, and an equitable division of receipts, in a commercial union; and said Commissioners shall report to the President, who shall lay the report before Congress.

The effect in the United States of the passage of this resolution would simply be to give shape and form to a desire for an enlarged relation with the greater half of the continent, on terms of a mutuality of interest as perfect as is possible to be created, and to disclose, as the result of inquiry, for the subsequent action of Congress, the advantages to both countries which would flow from the adoption of this policy. The effect in Canada of the adoption of such a policy by the United States would be, at the proper time, an acquiescence in it of a most marked character. The vast majority of



the population of Canada is made up of men whose interests would be enormously advanced by an open market in the United States, and a cheapened supply of manufactured goods,—composed largely as that people is of farmers, lumbermen, miners and fishermen. These number three to one the class who would be adversely affected, such as manufacturers, artisans and professional men. But even among these latter it is certain that a very large contingent are favorable to improved relations with this country. It is believed by those who watch the trend of affairs that a general parliamentary election, which occurs within two years, will result in a triumph for Commercial Union, should the United States promptly offer terms similar to those set forth in the above resolution. The election of a Parliament having a Commercial-Union complexion would result in the passage of a bill giving practical shape to the proposition above set forth. Such an event may have most momentous consequences, not only in Canada and in the United States but upon the relations that will thereafter exist between Canada and England. *It is to the very critical conditions that would thus be created between Great Britain and her greatest colony, that the attention of the people of the United States is now most earnestly asked.*

Heretofore the Dominion has shaped her own fiscal policy, and has been permitted, in her freedom of action to create a customs barrier against English goods in common with those from the United States and from other countries. But it is pushing this freedom of action to an extreme, to ask Great Britain to consent to

let one part of the British Empire charge a high rate of duty against the goods of another part of that Empire, while admitting free of duty the manufactures of the United States, her great commercial rival. It is even going a step further than this, because if the tariff under the proposed continental Commercial Union is to be regulated anywhere, it must be at Washington ; so that in the event of the Canadian Parliament passing a bill for Commercial Union with the United States, the spectacle would be presented of Congress fixing the rate of duty which shall prevail thereafter in nearly one-half of the British Empire, as against the goods manufactured in another portion of that Empire. It will be seen, therefore, that, if the people of Canada were in earnest in their desire for open and unrestricted trade with the United States, and made such an expression of their views through Parliament,—as they certainly would,—the dilemma of the Imperial Government would be extreme. That Government would either have to renounce the principles of free trade which her people have preached with such force for so many years, or it would have to give perfect liberty to Canada to trade with whom she chose. The Imperial Government, on the one hand, would be compelled to continue to Canada that liberty which she has hitherto enjoyed, or, on the other hand, refuse it, and thus afford a justification for a severance of the tie which has bound her with silken cords and with such affectionate regard that to talk of severing it now is considered as the highest form of treason. If Her Majesty should refuse to consent to this act of the

Canadian Parliament in favor of Commercial Union which would advance the interests of five millions of her Canadian agricultural subjects, and sacrifice them for the benefit of half a million English manufacturers, a serious shock would be given to the relations that now exist, and the annexation sentiment would then seem to many to be justifiable. If, on the other hand, Imperial consent were given for a Commercial Union with the United States, as in the end it no doubt would be, the effect upon Canada and its future would be decisive and remarkable. An open market for her minerals, her vast fishing possibilities, and enormous timber resources, with other stores of wealth, would soon beget an immigration into Canada of Americans and their followers that would assuredly so change the political complexion of the country that within two or three Parliaments she might find an outcome in an altered destiny. If, in the meantime, the great problem of self-government had been successfully worked out in the United States,—if a right solution had been achieved of many troublesome questions now impending, and the attractiveness of American institutions were such as to induce an annexation propaganda,—it could then, with far greater probability of success, be promoted. So that through Commercial Union some will see a short cut to annexation, while to others this proposed kind of partnership indefinitely postpones it.

It is argued by these latter that if all the advantages of a union of the material interests on the continent of North America are procured by the obliteration of the

trade line between the two countries, there will be no desire for a political union. Even if such should be the result, neither side need complain. The future may well be left to take care of itself in this respect, for meantime all the profits from a vastly increased trade, all the opportunities for growth and development essential to a better condition, either for subsequent union or an essential independence, will be equally shared by the American as by the Canadian. Serious questions threatening the peace of the two great English speaking nations of the world can be most readily adjusted, the transportation regulation problem solved, and a greatly improved relation established, by lifting up the customs line that now runs athwart the continent, and making it of uniform height, placing it, by mutual consent, right around the continent. Thus will come to the free trader, a welcome instalment of his desire for a larger market, and to the protectionist an extension of the principles which he claims are most adapted to develop the best interests of both countries. If in this latter extension he can include, without disturbing the equilibrium of taxation, an abundant supply of raw material, the duty on which is now the chief point of attack, and his weakest point of defense, a double purpose will be accomplished, in the maintenance of the tariff at its existing high rate, while permitting a free supply of raw material, furnished by consumers who would absorb a proportionate amount of the industrial products which it contributed to create.

The destiny that awaits the greater half of the continent, now included within the British possessions in North America, is a subject of the most profound interest. If, as resulting from a Commercial Union with the United States, and the political consequences that would follow from an enormous increase in population, with a dissatisfaction with colonialism and the development of a real national life, a movement should set in for the Independence of Canada, it would take but a few years to achieve it. Already there is a tendency in this direction in the Canadian mind, especially among the young men of Canada; and there would be less disinclination on the part of English statesmen to favor a movement of that character in preference to absorption by the United States. The Independence of Canada could result only in the creation of a great Republic founded upon very much the same principles as those that now pervade the United States. The area, comprising now eleven provinces and territories, could be divided advantageously into thirty States; and if the movement towards a Republic should have the hearty coöperation and all the commercial advantages of a close union with the United States, no greater achievement could be imagined than to build up a great nation, composed of people of the same lineage, the same language, the same laws, and the same literature, governed by the same principles, and having the same destiny in the advancement of civilization. England would be benefited, the United States would have a constant contribution to its greatness

without increased responsibility, and the new Canadian Republic would occupy a place before the world such as her magnificent proportions, her vast wealth, and the genius of her people could entitle her to.

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